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THE SPEECH

Of ROBERT *Earl of* Lothian, *Justice-General, His Majesties Commissioner to the General Assembly, after the Reading the* KING's *Letter. Upon the 16th Day of* January, 169½.

Right Reverend Ministers, and Elders of this General Assembly,

I Shall not take up your Time with any thing concerning my self, being sensible of so many Natural Unfitnesses for the Character I bear, that it were no little Disingenuity, to endeavour by an Apologie to extenuate them; But being very unexpectedly Commanded by the King, whose Orders I Dispute not, to meet you at this Assembly, I choosed rather to expose my Reputation, which hitherto I have been tender enough of, with this Disadvantage to come after a Person so well Qualify'd and Fitted for this Affair; then to decline any thing wherein His Majesty may think I could in the least be Serviceable to Him, or have any Prospect of being any manner of way Instrumental in settling the Peace of the Church, which hath for so long a time been Rent, without any great appearance hitherto of an effectual way for its Healing.

And indeed the known Inclinations of His Majesty to go the greatest length can consist with Royalty, to effectuate so good a Work, are no less Encouragements to your Well-wishers, than they should be Incitements to make you go all the Lengths and Advances on your parts, that such a Pious and Protestant King deserves at your Hands, who is willing to do more voluntarily, than what could ever be extorted from His Royal Predecessors, even in their lowest Condition; And which can in Reason never be expected from any shall succeed in the Royal Throne. But as no less was to be look'd for from the Return of your Prayers, and your sincere Endeavours in the work of the Ministry in the midst of sharpest Tryals, than the Blessing of such a King, your Deliverer, who in following the Stepts of his Renowned and Noble Predecessors the Princes of *Orange*, the Bulwark and Deliverers of the Protestent Interest throughout the World, hath now in a manner put it in your own Hands, to settle the Peace, and Unity of our Church; so upon the other hand, if there should be any Shiness or Remissness in coming up the length to give His Majesty a suitable Return, as it will be justly thought by your Friends, a Stroke from Heaven, from hidden Causes of GOD's unsearchable Decrees, as the Destruction of the Primitive Churches were; So the Opportunity lost, will be an Advantage and Rejoycing to your Enemies, probably not to be regained. But I shall Wish and Hope for better things from this Reverend and Wise Assembly, who have in your own Hands, to make your selves a more general one, by Uniting the

Church

Church, removing Error and Scandal, ſtopping the Mouths of your Adver ries, and make the Church of *Scotland* more famous than any Church, Church-men I know, who in no Age were much commended for Charity to their Brethren; tho' no Chriſtian Duty is ſo much recommended by H Scripture.

There is one thing I cannot forbear to mention, much talked of, being m in the Heads, and in Controverſie in this Age, which is *Church Government*, which I cannot deny to be Material, it being the Hedge about the Vineya without which the tender Plants cannot be raiſed, neither the mature Fruit preſerved; yet in compariſon of ſeveral others, it appears not to be of ſo gr conſequence, being that which ſo many Learned, Pious and Orthodox Divi differ ſo much upon, who would ſuffer Martyrdom before they would yield *Points*, that make not ſo great Noiſe, and tho' that *Fence* be of very good it cannot be ſuppoſed, it is raiſed to keep out Fellow-labourers, who are ling to work in the Vineyard; *Since thoſe came in at the laſt hour, were made e with thoſe that came at the firſt hour, who had born the burthen and heat of the* So it would ſeem reaſonable, that ſince the Biſhops, who were looked upo your Perſecutors, being laid aſide by Act of Parliament, and of whom, th cannot be ſaid, they did come up the length of the Piety, or Moral Virtue thoſe Biſhops of the Primitive Times, or of thoſe in our Neighbour Natio *England*, who have given ſo recent a Teſtimony of their Faithfulneſs; yet ſhould be no hindrance, why thoſe ſhould not be cordially received into the vernment, who are already in the exerciſe of the more Eſſentials, with this ble Advantage, both to ſtrengthen you conſiderably, and leave the oth without ſo much as the hopes of either Party, or Abettors,

What can after this be the grounds of rational Apprehenſions or Jealouſ Since Epiſcopacy is now Aboliſhed, and Presbiterie Eſtabliſhed by an Act of liament, which His Majeſty ſince, hath given repeated Aſſurances not to alt Sure then the moſt Prudent, whereof, I am perſwaded, there are many in Grave and Wiſe Aſſembly, will not ſtand upon Niceties and Punctilio's, ſo trinſick to Men of your Profeſſion, which even to Laicks, Princes or Sta where points of Honour have got ſo unreaſonable a Footing upon, or at but blameable Formalities, which neither anſwers the Laws of GOD nor nor Bigottry, which I hope you need not be guarded againſt, though inci to Church-men; And the Character of the Erroneous, is found to be oft Lodged in the narroweſt Heads and Capacities, and frequently miſtaken Zeal.

But I forbear, being loath to take up your time; Only this, that I think Sretch to Reaſon, to comprehend, how Royal Authority, in a Proteſtant K can claſh with a Proteſtant Church, in His own Dominions, no Articles of F being controverted; So I ſhall only lay before you, what His Majeſty with much Reaſon expects, and which both your Friends and Enemies, looks u with ſuch different Eyes and Expectations, and is, what I ſuppoſe, your Intereſt, in the firſt place, chearfully to receive your Brethren with open A who are willing to joyn, and who have never been made appear to be ei Scandalous or Erroneous, and who are ready to ſubmit to the Governm and leave thoſe things of ſmaller moment, until that great Bleſſing of a C ſtian Charitable Union be perfected, without which, all endeavours elſe, be to ſmall purpoſe; But upon the other hand, if there ſhall be any Miniſt that Preached under Epiſcopacy, ſhould now have any Remiſsneſs to embr the offer of your accepting of them, as it will diſcover what Spirits they are and what Meaſures ſhould be take, ſo it ſhould not retard, nor render ſuſp thoſe who freely offer themſelves.

But I ſhall hope, that henceforth the only endeavour ſhall be, in an H Emulation, who ſhall ſhew moſt readineſs to be Unite; That they may j their Labours in the Work of the Miniſtry; And that my part may only that of a *Witneſs*, with the ſatisfaction of having the Honour to acquaint Majeſty, of what I am confident, He will be ſo very well pleaſed with.

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